

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN, N.B., NOVEMBER 4, 1899

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH  
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This paper has the largest  
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Semi-Weekly Telegraph.

ST. JOHN, N.B., NOVEMBER 4, 1899.

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The disaster that has befallen the  
British army in South Africa by the cap-  
ture of the first battalion of the Glouces-  
ter Regiment, the first battalion of the  
Royal Irish Fusiliers and the 10th moun-  
tain battery of artillery is a heavy one,  
because it involves loss of prestige as  
well as loss of men. No such disaster  
has befallen Great Britain since Isan-  
dula, when a British regiment was  
almost wholly destroyed, and even that  
did not involve so great a loss of men as  
the surrender of these two battalions. To  
find a parallel to it we must go back  
to the disastrous Afghan campaign of  
1842 when of 4,000 soldiers and 12,000  
camp followers who were retreating from  
Kabul only one white man, Dr. Brydson,  
and four or five natives escaped. That  
seemed to be a staggering blow, but it  
had no little effect on the course of history  
that there are plenty of loyal subjects of  
the queen who have never even heard  
of it. All great nations who engage in  
war must expect such reverses, and the  
only way to meet them is by putting  
forth greater efforts and facing the  
crisis with manly courage.

The two battalions which had  
to surrender were not up to  
their full strength, the Glouces-  
ter regiment, when the war commenced,  
having 800 men and the Royal Irish  
Fusiliers, 700 men. Both these bat-  
talions have suffered considerable losses  
during the past three weeks, and their  
combined strength, at the time of the  
surrender, probably did not exceed 1,300  
men. The mountain battery may have  
had 150 officers and men, so that the  
total of troops surrendered would be  
something under 1,500 men.  
It will not be easy to reconcile  
the British people to such a loss which  
may be regarded as in the nature of a  
disgrace to the army. Their indignation  
and anger will be great, and they  
will be diligent in ascertaining who is  
to blame for this disaster. The fact that  
General White accepts the full responsi-  
bility himself will not satisfy them.

At this distance from the scene of  
operations it is not, perhaps, easy to  
judge of the reasons in favor of a mil-  
itary movement, but it is difficult to  
understand why General White should  
have detached these two battalions from  
the army at 11 o'clock at night,  
and required them to enter a  
mountainous country in the  
dark, thereby giving the enemy  
every opportunity of surrounding them.  
There will be many who will question  
Sir George Stewart White's generalship  
in this respect, and whether right or  
wrong his reputation will necessarily  
suffer, for success in most cases  
made the test of ability. Military critics  
may be willing to believe that a  
commander like William of Orange, who  
was usually unsuccessful in battle, was  
a great general, but the mass of mankind  
will prefer a leader like Marlborough,  
who was never beaten. We feel therefore  
that General White's usefulness is ended  
for the present campaign at least.  
His name is likely to go down into his-  
tory linked with those of such un-  
successful commanders as the Duke of  
York, Basine and others of the same  
class who have been concerned in cap-  
itulation.

The loss of the fifteen hundred men  
will reduce General White's army  
at Ladysmith to such an ex-

tent as to make his position  
dangerous. In Monday's battle when,  
as he states in his despatch, he had all  
his force in the field except the troops  
necessary to man the fortifications, he  
had in line only 11 battalions of infan-  
try. He has now only nine, and these  
nine do not, probably, number more than  
6,500 men. Add to these his artill-  
ery, cavalry and the regiments not en-  
gaged on Monday and 12,000 would  
seem to be the outside limit of General  
White's forces around Ladysmith. Is  
that number sufficient to enable him to  
hold his ground or will he be forced to  
retreat? This is a question that every  
citizen of the empire will be asking him-  
self today.

One fact ought to be borne in mind in  
connection with this question, and that  
is that Gen. White fought his battle on  
Monday without the assistance of the  
two battalions that were captured. It is  
evident that the surrender of the two  
battalions took place either on Sunday  
night or early on Monday morn-  
ing, and this will account for the  
extraordinary despatch that came  
from Holland via Berlin, that  
General White's whole force had sur-  
rendered. The British general, while  
engaged in his fight on Monday, was  
quite unaware that the force he had  
sent out to protect his left flank had been  
captured, and that he was liable to be  
outflanked in that quarter. Yet, with  
nine battalions of infantry and a small  
artillery and cavalry force, he was  
able to press back the Boers and drive  
them from their positions. That being  
so it is quite possible that he may be  
able to hold them in check for a few  
days, especially as he now has the  
assistance of the Naval brigade with its  
heavy guns. The Boers that attacked  
him on Monday must have been aware  
of the surrender of the two battalions  
and this no doubt inspired them with greater  
confidence and courage. Yet they failed  
to hold their ground against the British  
attack, and therefore they may be in  
position to hope that other Boer attacks  
will fail. The great numerical superi-  
ority of the Boers, however, enables  
them to outflank the British and sur-  
round Ladysmith, and this must be  
guarded against.

Sir Redvers Buller, the commander-  
in-chief in South Africa, arrived at Cape  
Town yesterday, as we anticipated he  
would do, and will soon be at the front.  
His presence will be a great encourage-  
ment to the troops, but reinforcements  
are urgently needed, and it will be a  
week at least before any can reach Ladys-  
mith. The five or six thousand British  
troops, comprising the first detachment  
of the Army Corps, which left South-  
ampton on 20th inst., are expected to  
arrive at Cape Town next Sunday.  
They will doubtless be sent to the front  
immediately, but in the mean time  
much may have happened. It is to be  
hoped that the British position at Ladys-  
mith can be held for another week and  
that the reinforcements may arrive be-  
fore the Boers succeeded in getting much  
farther South.

The enemies of Great Britain all over  
the world will rejoice as the British ad-  
vance at Ladysmith, and the friends of  
the Boers will be correspondingly elated.  
But the British people will only be  
stiffened in their determination to bring  
this war to a successful close  
and to place the Boers under their  
feet. British supremacy in South  
Africa must and will be maintained  
at all cost and no sacrifice will be  
deemed too great to ensure that result.  
The British forces now on the way to  
South Africa would seem to be ample  
to bring the war to a triumphant end,  
but if more are needed they will be  
forthcoming. The British colonies,  
especially Canada, may well rejoice  
that they have been afforded an  
opportunity of proving their devotion to  
the empire by sending contingents to  
South Africa. Our Canadian regiment  
will be at the front before the end of  
this month, and there is no doubt that  
it will be afforded an opportunity of  
distinguishing itself. The people of Can-  
ada will watch the career of this regiment  
with interest and pride, and if more  
men are wanted to maintain British  
power in South Africa Canada is pre-  
pared to send another regiment to the  
seat of war as good as the one which has  
just left our shores.

Wednesday General White's explana-  
tion of the cause of the disaster by  
which two battalions of infantry and a  
battery of artillery were lost was made  
public, but we fail to see that it relieves  
him in any way from the heavy re-  
sponsibility involved in the occurrence.  
General White's despatches, as they  
appear in the newspapers, are models  
of brevity, and it is almost impossible  
to ascertain from them the order of  
events. However, his account of the  
capture of the British left wing is more  
lucid than usual, and we are able from  
it to learn the time when the surrender  
took place and the circumstances under  
which it was brought about. We also get  
a clearer view of the extent of the  
disaster and of the number of men taken  
prisoners.

From General White's statement it  
appears that the number of men taken  
prisoners was considerably smaller than  
the first accounts would lead us to ex-  
pect. The whole of the two battalions

involved were not taken, because they  
were not sent out, but only a part of  
them. Of the Royal Irish there were  
six companies, which would mean about  
450 men, and of the Gloucester regiment  
four half companies, which would be  
about 175 men. Posing the number of  
artillerymen captured at 125, the total  
loss of the British would be 750. This  
is not enough, but not so bad as a loss  
of 2,000, or even 1,500 would have been,  
the latter figure being the one at  
which we estimated the British loss  
Wednesday. This estimate was made on  
the supposition that the whole of the  
two infantry battalions had been  
captured, but the Royal Irish have still  
two companies left, while the Gloucester  
regiment has six. This makes the dis-  
aster far less shocking than it at first  
appeared, and will relieve to some ex-  
tent the fears of those who thought it  
would weaken the army so much as to  
make it impossible for General White  
to defend Ladysmith. It appears that  
General White's ability to defend Ladys-  
mith has not been in any way impaired  
by the loss of these men.

The circumstances of the disaster were  
peculiar. The men were sent out at 11  
o'clock on Sunday night to seize a position  
which if held would have turned the  
enemy's right flank. These troops were  
attacked when about two miles from the  
point to which they had been sent and  
their miles were stamped, running  
away with practically the whole of the  
ammunition of the infantry. In this  
extremely the infantry and the men of  
the battery acted a gallant part and  
seized a hill on which they fortified  
themselves. There they fought from  
dawn until 3 p. m., when all their am-  
munition being exhausted they were  
compelled to surrender. These seven  
hundred and fifty brave men were at-  
tacked by masses of the enemy of many  
times their own number, and when the  
time of their heroic defense is fully told  
it may be that this feat of arms will be  
found worthy to take rank with some of  
the greatest achievements of the British  
army. No fault could be found with the  
conduct of the officers or soldiers, it is  
only the generalship that took them  
there that is in question.

The plan of General White which led  
to such a disastrous issue seems to have  
been intended as a coup that would  
take the Boers at a disadvantage, and  
surprise them. Night attacks have  
sometimes been highly successful and  
night marches are frequently resorted to,  
but there is always a considerable  
element of risk involved, and that risk  
is increased greatly when the country is  
mountainous. It would only have been  
an act of prudence if General White had  
sent some cavalry with the detachment  
to feel the enemy, for as things turned  
out the men walked right into a trap,  
the hills which dominated the defile  
through which they advanced being  
occupied by the Boers, although appar-  
ently not in very great numbers. When  
the guns and ammunition were lost  
by the stampeding of the mules it would  
have been more prudent for Lt.-Col. Carlton,  
who was in command of the detachment,  
if he had endeavored to fight his way back  
to camp. As it was the defense of the  
hill he occupied could not be greatly  
prolonged without ammunition, and  
some effort ought surely to have been  
made to get the jaws of the desperate  
position of the two battalions to General  
White. Perhaps the attempt was made;  
it may be that messengers were sent to  
General White who were unable to get  
through the lines of the enemy. Here,  
again, the lack of mounted men must  
have been seriously felt and contributed  
largely to the disaster. Certainly if  
General White had been aware of the  
position of this detachment early in the  
morning, he could have relieved them  
before their surrender at 3 p. m. As it  
was he seems to have assumed that they  
were safe. Yet he must have had some  
information in regard to them, for in his  
despatch of Monday afternoon he men-  
tions the stampede of the mules, and  
states that he was called for in regard to  
the affair, especially with reference to the  
conduct of Lt.-Col. Carlton and of  
General White.

Apart from the details connected with  
the reverse to these two battalions there  
is nothing that is not reassuring in the  
news from Ladysmith. General White  
seems to be confident of being able to  
hold that place, the army is in high  
spirits, the Boers were repulsed again on  
Tuesday and their heavy guns dis-  
mounted and British reinforcements are  
now at hand. By this day week General  
White ought to have five thousand ad-  
ditional soldiers at his disposal, and  
reinforcements will arrive at the rate of  
four or five thousand a day from that  
time. Unless the Boers are able to  
secure a decided victory during the next  
six or seven days their last chance will  
be gone.

The recent disaster to the British  
arms gave the French an opportunity of  
showing their real feelings towards  
Great Britain. They were delighted  
when they learned that 2,000 British  
soldiers had been killed or captured;  
they will be down to a cor-  
responding degree when they  
learn the details of the disaster.  
As for the Germans their  
official press is hastening to explain the  
necessity of Germany cultivating the

good will of England. The Germans  
will not walk into the trap set for them  
by France and undertake to intervene  
for the benefit of the Transvaal Boers.  
That would be playing the French game  
too well and it looks now as if the French  
would have to play it alone.

The statement made by Lord George  
Hamilton, secretary of state for India, in  
a speech which he made Wednesday  
will attract attention. He said that the  
ultimate victory of Great Britain is cer-  
tain and that "when the terms which we  
as victors will propose to the vanquished  
are known foreign nations  
will see that the main cause  
which has forced us to embark  
upon this contest is not a desire of  
pecuniary profit or of territorial aggran-  
dizement, but a determination to emanci-  
pate a vast territory for the common  
benefit of mankind from an ignoble and  
degrading tyranny." These are good  
words, but it is to be hoped that they  
do not mean that the two bogus South  
African republics are to be allowed to ex-  
ist as independent states. That would  
be throwing away the fruits of victory  
so that it might be necessary to fight  
these two republics over again. The  
only safe course will be to make them  
parts of the British empire either as  
new colonies or appendices to the col-  
onies now existing in South Africa.

It was announced last Thursday by the  
war office that communication with  
Ladysmith had been interrupted for  
some hours, but that this was not re-  
garded as in any way confirming the  
rumor which came by way of Brussels  
of a complete investment of Ladysmith  
or of the capture of Olenso. To cut the  
communications between Ladysmith and  
Durban is a feat that might be easily  
accomplished by an enterprising enemy  
with a comparatively small force,  
for it could be done by  
the mere cutting of the telegraph  
wires. Boer sympathizers in Natal  
might do this, although it would be a  
risky operation for them. To interrupt  
the communications is one thing, but to  
capture Ladysmith is another. The best  
military expert opinion is that Ladysmith  
is in no immediate danger, even if it  
is surrounded by a Boer army of  
30,000 men. We publish elsewhere the  
opinion of the military critic of the West-  
minster Gazette on this point, and the re-  
asons which he advances to justify his views  
would seem to be sound. This opinion  
is supported by that of Major W. E. A. M.  
Simpson, chief of the military informa-  
tion division of the United States army,  
who, in a statement which he prepared  
for the New York Herald, after referring  
to the capture of the two battalions and  
the mountain battery, says:—

"The Boer hold positions extending  
over an area of 180 degrees from the  
west to the east, and in the east  
are in excellent form, encouraged by  
success, and greatly superior in num-  
bers. It should be their plan to set  
with the greatest vigor, bring all their  
forces to bear and crush Sir George  
White's army before he can be rein-  
forced."

"Two courses are open to the British.  
One is to withdraw southward toward  
Pretoria while the way is still  
open. The other is to hold their ground.  
The choice would depend largely, it  
would seem, upon the question of sup-  
plies."

"It would have been the part of pru-  
dence to lay in a large stock of provi-  
sions, and this has probably been done.  
It is said that the water supply has been  
cut off by the Boers, but this is not  
so anxiously, as an ample supply  
will be found in the wells. If this be true  
Sir George White should be able to  
maintain himself on the defensive until  
he receives reinforcements direct from  
the southward."

"This is the opinion of a disinterested  
observer, and it will be generally ac-  
cepted as accurate."  
General White, in his account of the  
operations around Ladysmith mentioned  
only eleven battalions as being engaged,  
although we know that there are four-  
teen in Natal. The other three bat-  
talions may not be with him, but at  
Pretoria, the capital of the  
colony. If in the latter place they would  
still be available for the relief of the  
force at Ladysmith.

The foolish attempt of the Conserva-  
tive leaders to make political capital out  
of the question of sending a Canadian  
contingent to South Africa, and to induce  
the public to believe that all the patri-  
otism of Canada is in the Conservative  
party, are only worthy of contempt. The  
people of Canada are not so easily fooled  
as Sir Charles Tupper and his lieutenants  
seem to think. They have not forgotten  
that was a Liberal government that  
gave Great Britain a preferential  
tariff, nor will they forget that it  
is a Liberal government that is  
sending a Canadian contingent across  
the sea. They will also have to recall  
the fact that when the so-called "national  
policy" tariff went into force in 1879,  
and it was stated that this tariff would  
be injurious to British commerce, it was  
the Toronto Mail that replied "so much  
the worse for British commerce." The  
Toronto Mail was then and is now the  
leading Conservative organ of Canada.

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EXCEEDINGLY STYLISH.

This Garment "Made to order" by a Tailor though  
perhaps "not to fit" would be \$17.00.

SHOREY'S CLOTHING  
is not made to order, but  
made to fit, and every thread is guaranteed.

and with this record against it has the  
assurance to accuse some members of the  
Liberal party of lack of patriotism.

The Toronto Globe calls attention to a  
feature of the despatch of a Canadian con-  
tingent to South Africa which has not  
sufficiently emphasized—the remark-  
ably celerity with which the work was  
done. The British military authorities  
are receiving great credit for the rapid  
manner in which they mobilized  
their army corps and despatched it to  
South Africa, but even greater credit is  
due to the militia department of Canada  
for its good work in connection  
with the despatch of the Canadian  
regiment. The British regiments,  
which were sent to South Africa,  
were already in existence, and their  
training had all been in the direction of  
being ready for any emergency, but the  
Canadian regiment was non-existent  
when the order came to raise it. Yet in  
less than four days this regiment was  
raised, equipped, outfitted, clothed and  
sent on its way to South Africa, although  
nearly 180 men had to travel many  
hundreds of miles to reach the point of  
embarkation, while the Manitoba men  
had to travel 2,000 miles and the British  
Columbia men more than 3,000 miles.

After much delay, General White has  
been able to furnish the British war  
office with the numbers killed and wound-  
ed in the engagement on Monday, when  
portions of the Royal Irish and Glouces-  
ter regiments and the mountain battery  
were compelled to surrender. The num-  
ber of killed was 80, of whom six were  
officers, and the number wounded 240,  
of whom nine were officers. This  
makes a total of 300 killed  
and wounded out of a force  
that could not have exceeded  
750. These figures show what a gallant  
defense the beleaguered soldiers made,  
and it will invest their surrender with a  
halo of heroism which will outshine the  
deeds of the victors. Such a defense is  
in itself a triumph, and it will go down  
into history linked with the charge of  
the Light Brigade at Balaclava and  
other great war achievements of the  
British race.

The question of sending another Cana-  
dian regiment to the Transvaal is being  
discussed all over the dominion.  
Whether another regiment is to be sent  
or not will depend wholly on the British  
government, for no doubt one has been  
already offered. A second regiment  
could be raised much more rapidly  
than the first because there are hundreds  
of good men now only waiting a chance  
to go to South Africa to fight  
the Boers. We doubt, however, whether  
a second regiment would be accepted for  
Great Britain has men enough now on  
their way to South Africa to finish the  
business, and the principle of British's  
greatest colony, Canada, being a partner  
in the defense of the empire is quite as  
well established with one regiment as  
with two.

A Dublin despatch states that when  
the news of the surrender of the Glouces-  
ter and Irish Regiments was received in  
that city the more extreme Irish Na-  
tionalists made no attempt to conceal  
their delight at the defeat. The Even-  
ing Telegraph said: "The big bully tri-  
umphant is no lovely spectacle. The  
big bull beaten is the very same of dis-  
grace. The feeling of the righteous re-  
joicing at the triumph of the forces of  
liberty is mingled with regret that Irish  
soldiers participated in the disaster of  
the oppressor." The Evening Herald  
said: "The idea of England menacing  
Russia in Manchuria or meeting her ad-  
vance on the Indian frontier is a bit  
laughable after General White's mes-  
sage. Fancy opposing real soldiers with  
the padded chests of the Gloucestershire  
regiment."

Ireland contributes more soldiers to  
the British army in proportion to its  
population than any other part of the  
United Kingdom. At the end of 1897  
the population of Ireland was 4,551,733  
and the number of Irish soldiers in the  
army was 26,374. England and Wales  
had 31,055,355 inhabitants, and con-

tributed 158,166 soldiers to the army.  
Scotland with 4,218,279 inhabitants fur-  
nished only 16,435 soldiers. As soldiers  
speak louder than words these figures  
show that the true feelings of the Irish  
people towards the empire are not fully  
voiced by some of the nationalist news-  
papers.

Shediac's Contribution.

The residents of Shediac have sub-  
scribed \$90 to the fund for the New  
Brunswick volunteers, and this amount  
was received by His Worship Mayor  
Sear last evening with the following  
letter:—

EMBEDAC, Oct. 30, '99.  
E. SEAR, Mayor.  
DEAR SIR,—Enclosed please find P. O.  
order for \$90, being the offer of the  
people of Shediac to the provincial fund  
in aid of our worthy sons, who are just  
going to fight our battles in Africa.  
I enclose a list of subscribers for publi-  
cation in a paper of each shade of  
politics.

I am yours, etc.,  
Jas. FARR,  
The subscribers are: R. C. Tait, W. A.  
Russell, \$10 each; Chas. Harper, E. J.  
Smith, O. M. Melanson & Co., J. Frier, \$5  
each; Jas. Webster, \$2.50; J. D. Weldon,  
E. A. Smith, John McFadden, J. O. Bray,  
Dr. L. Belliveau, Rev. A. T. Bert,  
Senator Fortier, A. Dickie, Fortier,  
Dorion & Co., Gordon Dickie, W. E.  
Wood, \$2 each; J. G. Wilber, J. N. Bourque,  
F. A. Borden, Rev. J. Howie, J. A. Murray,  
S. O. Chabrier, J. O. Roberts, H. D. Archib-  
ald, W. Wilber, Jos. Moore,  
G. L. Welling, Arthur G. Bateman, Jas.  
McQueen, M. B. Stevens, E. E. Mcgrugger,  
A. G. Lawton, Stead Black, W. A. Ward, H.  
each; A. J. Webster, \$1.50; O. C. Hamilton,  
S. F. Robitoux, B. G. Burns, H. Mc-  
Donald, John Blouin, J. A. Blouin, Mil-  
lars McFadden, \$5 each; P. L. Brou, A.  
McLague, 25 each.

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to use our Metallic  
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nothing else as good for interior finish.  
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